

that allowed them to capture the new federal funds. The state law allowed Oklahoma to buy land to be flooded and to operate and maintain projects after construction. As a result, the 1936 act authorized four projects — Great Salt Plains, Fort Supply, Hulah, and Optima — and the Legislature authorized \$100,000 so Don McBride, then in the state water office, could buy land for Fort Supply and Great Salt Plains.<sup>3</sup>

- The timing was right. The Tulsa District was formed in response to a new federal policy to control flooding through big upstream dams, in an era and region in which dusty mouths craved water. In the Depression and again with the upswing of activity that came after World War II, the nation was looking to water resources development to stabilize employment.
- And luck was right, more often than not. The element of chance — simply the luck of the draw, perhaps — often fell on the side of water resource development. How else could one explain the uncanny tendency for there to be, as journalist Joe Howell called it, over and over “the right man at the right time”?<sup>5</sup>

### **“TULSA DISTRICT ENGINEERS INVOLVED IN 101 PROJECTS — A \$100 Million Team Effort.”**

*“Tucked away in the upper reaches of a Tulsa office building, in construction shacks, or making field studies in pertinent sections of a seven-state area are the men and women of the Tulsa District Army Corps of Engineers,” wrote a Wichita Eagle reporter in 1966.*

*“In the office or on the project site, it’s difficult to distinguish between corps personnel and others involved in these many developments.*

*“Yet when you can find one with a few minutes time to spare, it’s quickly discernible that he considers himself simply a part of the ‘team effort.’*

*“During the coming 12 months, the Tulsa District . . . will supervise the spending of some \$100 million in project efforts . . .*

*“The Tulsa District (under direction of Col. George A. Rehb as district engineer) has approximately 1,400 federal civil service employees.*

*“Other Army officers rounding out the military complement are deputy district engineer Lt. Col. David K. Craig, Tulsa; and Maj. Elbert W. Link, resident engineer on the Pine Creek project near Valliant, Okla.*

*“Concerned solely with civil works projects, the Tulsa District presently is*

*involved in 101 projects ranging from reconnaissance phase through planning, construction and operational stages.*

*“Col. Rehb said his District is operating 18 completed dam and reservoir projects, of which four produce hydroelectric power.*

*“An additional 14 local protection projects are under supervision of the District, such as the Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project.*

*“Rehb said total capital investment in recreational facilities, excluding land costs, at the 18 sites is in excess of \$11 million.*

*“Citing the growing use of recreational facilities at the locations, Rehb noted that more than 22.5 million visits to the reservoirs were recorded last year, involving an operation-maintenance cost of approximately \$1.5 million.*

*“The bulk of the district’s financial efforts currently are directed to the Arkansas River navigation project — a \$1.2 billion undertaking.*

*“Sixteen major projects now under construction include locks and dams, along with bank stabilization on the Arkansas River at an outlay of \$682.7 million.”<sup>5</sup>*